



IT'S NEWS TO ME: BIASED REPORTING IN THE MEDIA

Subject: Journalism | Current: 2009 | Grade: 9-12

Day: 1-3 of 3

1 Purpose ----- To help students become critical consumers of the news.

2 Duration Of Lesson ----- 3 class periods/days.

3 Additional Topics Addressed ----- Point of View or Perspective, Bias, Verbal and Non Verbal Communication, Where to Find Different Sources of News, Careful Use of Adjectives and Adverbs in Reporting, How to write accurate, balanced news.

4 Objectives ----- To encourage students to search out various viewpoints from a variety of media sources when forming their opinions of truth in reporting.

5 Standards & Benchmarks ----- **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS**

Students discuss ideas for writing with other writers. They write coherent and focused essays that show a well-defined point of view and tightly reasoned argument. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (prewriting, writing, editing, and revising).

9.4

Establish a coherent thesis that conveys a clear perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing. (Core Standard)

9.4.2



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Revise writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and perspective, the precision of word choice, and the appropriateness of tone by taking into consideration the audience, purpose, and formality of the context. (Core Standard) **9.4.12**

Advanced (Level 4): Write responses to literature that demonstrate an understanding of significant events, perspectives, and author style. **9.5.16**

Fluent English Proficient (Level 5): Write responses to literature that demonstrate understanding of significant ideas and events, perspectives, author style, and communication (rhetorical) devices. **9.5.22**

Advanced (Level 4): Review and revise writing for appropriate word choice, organization, point of view, and transitions. **9.6.17**

Students formulate thoughtful judgments about oral communication. They deliver focused and coherent presentations of their own that convey clear and distinct perspectives and solid reasoning. Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine the traditional speech strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description. They use gestures, tone, and vocabulary appropriate to the audience and purpose. Students use the same Standard English conventions for oral speech that they use in their writing. **9.7**

Comprehension: Summarize a speaker's purpose and point of view and ask questions concerning the speaker's content, delivery, and attitude toward the subject. (Core Standard) **9.7.1**

Advanced (Level 4): Paraphrase a speaker's purpose and point of view and ask questions regarding content, delivery, and perspective. **9.7.17**

Fluent English Proficient (Level 5): Summarize a speaker's purpose and point of view and ask relevant questions regarding content, delivery, and perspective. **9.7.24**

Students discuss ideas for writing with other writers. They write coherent and focused essays that show a well-defined point of view and tightly reasoned argument. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (prewriting, writing, editing, and revising). **10.4**



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Establish a coherent thesis that conveys a clear perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing. (Core Standard)

10.4.2

Synthesize information from multiple sources. Identify complexities and inconsistencies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium, including almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents, and Internet sources. (Core Standard)

10.4.6

Advanced (Level 4): Write responses to literature that demonstrate understanding of significant events, perspectives, and author style.

10.5.16

Fluent English Proficient (Level 5): Write responses to literature that demonstrate understanding of significant ideas and events, perspectives, author style, and communication (rhetorical) devices.

10.5.22

Advanced (Level 4): Review and revise writing for appropriate word choice, organization, point of view, and transitions.

10.6.17

Fluent English Proficient (Level 5): Review and revise writing for appropriate word choice, organization, consistent point of view, transitions, and standard grammatical forms.

10.6.23

Students formulate thoughtful judgments about oral communication. They deliver focused and coherent presentations of their own that convey clear and distinct perspectives and solid reasoning. Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine the traditional speech strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description. They use gestures, tone, and vocabulary appropriate to the audience and purpose. Students use the same Standard English conventions for oral speech that they use in their writing.

10.7

Comprehension: Summarize a speaker's purpose and point of view and ask questions concerning the speaker's content, delivery, and attitude toward the subject. (Core Standard)

10.7.1

Advanced (Level 4): Paraphrase a speaker's purpose and point of view; ask questions regarding content, delivery, and perspective.

10.7.18



Deliver descriptive presentations that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• establish a clear point of view on the subject of the presentation.• establish the relationship with the subject of the presentation (whether the presentation is made as an uninvolved observer or by someone who is personally involved).• contain effective, factual descriptions of appearance, concrete images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details. (Core Standard)	10.7.19
Fluent English Proficient (Level 5): Summarize a speaker's purpose and point of view; ask relevant questions regarding content, delivery, and perspective.	10.7.24
Students write coherent and focused texts that show a well-defined point of view and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' progression through the stages of the writing process (prewriting, writing, editing, and revising).	11.4
Comprehension: Summarize a speaker's purpose and point of view and ask questions to draw interpretations of the speaker's content and attitude toward the subject. (Core Standard)	11.7.1
Students write coherent and focused texts that show a well-defined point of view and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' progression through the stages of the writing process (prewriting, writing, editing, and revising).	12.4
Use point of view, characterization, style, and related elements for specific narrative and aesthetic (artistic) purposes. (Core Standard)	12.4.3
Advanced (Level 4): Write responses to literature that demonstrate an understanding of significant events, perspectives, and author style.	12.5.19
Fluent English Proficient (Level 5): Write responses to literature that demonstrate an understanding of significant ideas and events, perspectives, author style, and communication (rhetorical) devices.	12.5.26
Comprehension: Summarize a speaker's purpose and point of view, discuss, and ask questions to draw interpretations of the speaker's content and attitude toward the subject. (Core Standard)	12.7.1



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Advanced (Level 4): Paraphrase a speaker's purpose and point of view; ask questions regarding content, delivery, and perspective.

12.7.18

Fluent English Proficient (Level 5): Summarize a speaker's purpose and point of view; ask relevant questions regarding content, delivery, and perspective.

12.7.24

COMPOSITION

Students write coherent and focused texts that show a well-defined point of view and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' progression through the stages of the writing process (prewriting, writing, editing, revising, and publishing).

CMP.1

SPEECH & COMMUNICATION

Students formulate thoughtful judgments about oral communication. They deliver focused and coherent presentations that convey clear and distinct perspectives and demonstrate solid reasoning. Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional speech strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description. They use gestures, tone, and vocabulary appropriate to the audience and purpose. Students use the same Standard English conventions for oral speech that they use in their writing.

SPC.1

Summarize a speaker's purpose and point of view, discuss, and ask questions to draw interpretations of the speaker's content and attitude toward the subject.

SPC.1.1

Use logical, (ad hominem, arguing from a personal perspective; ad populum, appealing to the people) ethical, and emotional appeals that enhance a specific tone and purpose.

SPC.1.4

Deliver oral reports on historical investigations that: use exposition, narration, description, persuasion, or some combination of those to support the thesis (the position on the topic). analyze several historical records of a single event, examining each perspective on the event. describe similarities and differences between research sources, using information derived from primary and secondary sources to support the presentation. include information on all relevant perspectives and consider the validity (accuracy and truthfulness) and reliability (consistency) of sources.

SPC.1.17



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JOURNALISM

Students understand and apply knowledge of legal and ethical principles related to the functioning of a free and independent press in the United States. **JRN.2**

Analyze case studies or examples and evaluate how ethical responsibilities and principles affect reporting and the credibility (the belief that what someone says is true) of what is reported. **JRN.2.7**

Students analyze and evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of news and information found in print, on the Internet, and in other media. **JRN.3**

Students discuss ideas for writing with others. They write coherent and focused stories that demonstrate well-researched information, appropriate journalistic structure and style, and a tightly reasoned flow of ideas. Students progress through stages of journalistic writing processes **JRN.4**

Identify relevant issues and events of interest to readers through current news analysis, surveys, research reports, statistical data, and interviews with readers. **JRN.4.2**

Ask clear interview questions to guide a balanced and unbiased information-gathering process that includes: researching background information, formulating questions that elicit valuable information, observing and recording details during the interview, effectively concluding the interview, double-checking information before writing the story, and keeping dated notes or interview records on file. **JRN.4.3**

Demonstrate knowledge of the structure of journalistic writing (feature stories and columns, news stories, op ed pieces, commentaries) for a variety of print, broadcast and Internet media that includes: the inverted pyramid (lead, most important details, less important details, least important details), narrative storytelling pattern (indirect lead, facts and information, closing), or combinations of the inverted pyramid and narrative storytelling pattern. **JRN.4.5**

Students write news stories, features stories and columns, in-depth issue features, reviews, editorials, or opinions and commentaries effectively and accurately in print and media, while adhering to legal and ethical standards for journalist. Students demonstrate an understanding of the research, organizational, and drafting strategies in journalistic writing processes. Student writing demonstrates a command of Standard English and the use of media formats that follow specific style manual guidelines for consistency. **JRN.5**



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Write news stories that: use effective headlines (label, sentence, combination) and captions. use a variety of creative leads. contain adequate information from credible sources. narrate events accurately including their significance to the audience. include appropriate quotations and proper attribution. describe specific incidents, and actions, with sufficient detail. cite sources of information correctly. follow standard journalistic language and format conventions.

JRN.5.1

Write feature stories (human interest, profile/personality, sports, special occasion, humor, sidebars) and columns that: use effective headlines (label, sentence, combination) and captions. use a variety of creative leads. contain adequate information from credible sources. narrate events accurately including their significance to the audience. include appropriate quotations and proper attribution. describe specific incidents, and actions, with sufficient detail. cite sources of information correctly. follow standard journalistic language and format conventions.

JRN.5.2

Write in-depth issue features that: use effective headlines (label, sentence, combination) and captions. are adequately researched and use a variety of leads. explore the personal significance of an experience use appropriate quotations and provide proper attribution. draw comparisons between specific incidents and broader themes related to important beliefs or generalizations about life. maintain a balance between individual events and more general or abstract ideas. cite sources of information using the correct form for attribution. follow standard journalistic language and format conventions.

JRN.5.3

Write reviews of art exhibits, musical concerts, theatrical events, books or films that: use effective headlines (label, sentence, combination) and captions, use a variety of creative leads and organize material to adequately inform or persuade readers, identify critical elements of the work being reviewed (author, performer, artist, topic, theme, title, location of the event or media, cost), compare the new work to previous work, describe audience reaction, use appropriate quotations and provide proper attribution, follow standard journalistic language and format conventions.

JRN.5.4

Write editorials, opinion pieces, or commentaries that: use effective headlines (label, sentence, combination) and captions, are adequately researched and use a variety of creative leads, explore the personal significance of an experience, draw comparisons between specific incidents and broader themes related to important beliefs or generalizations about life, maintain a balance between individual events and more general and abstract ideas, use appropriate quotations and provide proper attribution, cite sources of information using the correct form for attribution, follow standard journalistic language and format conventions.

JRN.5.5



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Use varied and extended or technical and scientific vocabulary or language that is appropriate for journalistic style, different purposes, and a variety of audiences.

JRN.5.6

Students use principles, elements, tools, and techniques of media design to analyze, navigate, and create effective, aesthetically pleasing media formats.

JRN.6

Follow basic rules of newspaper and online publication design related to layout.

JRN.6.2

6

Vocabulary

----- The following terms will be used in this lesson.

- Objective
- Subjective
- Bias
- Slant
- Perspective
- Medium/Media
- Fairness
- Balance in Reporting
- Denotation
- Connotation

7

Materials

----- Computer and Projector, student computer lab, handout containing the text of one story covered by three different broadcast networks.

8

Additional Resources

----- The Three Little Pigs as told by the Wolf, Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News by Bernard Goldberg. www.newseum.org



9 Procedures & Methods

On Day 1 students will be asked to truthfully report on an incident that occurs in class. They will have differing accounts based upon a variety of factors. Students will read the Wolf's side of The Three Little Pigs, showing that the same story can have different sides and viewpoints. Teacher will map out a topic on the board – a traffic accident, for example - and help the students identify all of the different people who come into play: police, witnesses, victim's families, insurance companies, attorneys, judge, etc.

On Day 2, students will watch three different versions of one news stories from three different networks and discuss the differences in the delivery, editing, visuals selected, word choices, and nonverbal messages observed. The teacher will then show a news event that everyone will see and ask them to write a three paragraph news story on the event as fairly as possible. Students will share their stories with their peers and discuss different word choices or coverages that could have been used in telling the true story. The teacher will collect both versions of this story.

On Day 3, students will report to a computer lab and log onto www.newseum.org to see what the major newspapers in the U.S. and around the World headlined on their front pages for today. They will also peruse the archives to see how the world's papers covered Sept. 11, 2001 on their front pages the next day, including which photos the editors chose to signify the event. Students will reflect in a paper or journal entry how a consumer of the media might get the “real” or “entire” story. Is there such a thing as news without bias, and what factors might affect it?

A. Introduction

While the teacher is introducing the lesson, a student argument erupts in the classroom (that has been prearranged by the teacher and the two students), the fight boils to a climax with one student tossing his chair back and yelling at the second. The second responds in like and chases the first out. The rest of the class is stunned. The teacher asks the students to write down what they just witnessed – what they heard and what they saw.



B. Development

Students will color their accounts based on where they sat, when they started paying attention, their own opinions of the different individuals, personal bias, and word choices they use in their descriptions. The teacher calls the students back into the classroom who then listen to the “news” accounts read by their classmates on what they saw happen. Then the two students who staged the fight reflect on what really happened. Teacher discusses Point of View and how personal bias can affect not only how an individual witnesses an event, but how a media broadcaster reports it.

C. Practice

Students will write a news story based on a common event in class, critique it with their peers, examining word choices, including unnecessary adverbs and adjectives. Students will then rewrite their final version based upon the feedback and submit it to the teacher.

Students will also log onto www.newseum.org and look at the world’s major newspapers headlines for one day, discussing why common news may have been featured in some publications and not others.

Students will go into the archives of www.newseum.org and study the world’s major newspaper headlines for the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001. They will find common photographs used on the front pages from Barcelona to New York City to Beijing. They will also notice the size and language of the headlines, showing the importance of such a story. They will discuss these similarities and differences with the entire class.

D. Independent Practice

Students will write a personal reflection essay or journal on how a consumer of the news can get the real or balanced story. They will also reflect on whether it is possible to have any news completely free from bias – even if unintended.

E. Accommodations (Differentiated Instruction)

For students who have difficulty with comprehension issues, a graphic organizer such as a Venn diagram or a compare/contrast chart may be used to provide a more concrete way to complete the third Practice portion of the lesson. Students who have visual, mobile or hearing impairments may need adaptive computer software to assist with using the computer and accessing the websites for information.



F. Checking For Understanding

One check will be through class discussion, with attention given to all students.

A second check will be with their original news account, and their rewritten version following partner peer conversation and critique that will be evaluated by the teacher.

A third check will be reading their reflection and their conclusion regarding the absence of complete objectivity, and the need to consult various media outlet on the same story for a more accurate picture.

Homework: Students will identify one front page or top news story and identify three different sources to read or watch. They will then write a summary on what they perceive the truth to be following their comprehension of the different sources.

G. Closure

Several careers are available within Homeland Security that students may want to explore, including careers as public affairs officers in the DHS's Office of Public Affairs. There are also Web sites to design and report for, as well as maintain with the latest information for the department of Homeland Security. The Office of Intelligence and Analysis collects, gathers, processes, analyzes, produces or disseminates intelligence information, including homeland security, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction information.

10 Evaluation

Students will be graded for editing their initial news story based on the common news telecast. Their stories should be free of adverbs and adjectives and any attempts at bias. 15 points.

Students will define the vocabulary – 20 pts.

Chart out the differences from receiving the news from the different media: TV, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, Online . Advantages and Disadvantages = 25 pts.

Students will be graded on their reflection of whether news can be fully objective; and what should consumers do to receive the most truthful account. – 25 pts.



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Students will be graded on their homework assignment where they read or watch three different accounts of a top story and write a what they think the full story is . – 20 pts.

Students will be given points for participation in class discussion – 20 pts.

11 Teacher Reflection

The teacher will complete this section once the lesson has been taught.

12 Resources & Media

Computer and Projector, student computer lab, handout containing the text of one story covered by three different broadcast networks.

The True Story of Three Little Pigs as told by A. Wolf, Jon Scieszka (1989), Viking press 0-14-054056-3

Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News by Bernard Goldberg. www.newseum.org

Contact the local newspaper for a class set of newspapers to be donated- Newspapers in Education program.

<http://www.highschooljournalism.org>

<http://www.newseum.org>

www.nytimes.com/education

<http://www.dhs.gov/index.shtm>

<http://www.hg.org/article.asp?id=S616> “Allegations of Publishing and Broadcast Media Bias in the 2008 Presidential Election. (or another topical event)

<http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/media-and-the-project-of-empire/media-coverage-of-iraq-8-40.html>



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IT'S NEWS TO ME

BIASED REPORTING IN THE MEDIA/ 3 RUBRICS

Lecutre

- **Assignment:** Peer editing of final story

Rubric

BEST - 15 POINTS	BETTER - 10 POINTS	NOT THERE - 5 POINTS
1. Story is accurate	1. Story is accurate	1. There may be factual errors.
2. Story is free from typographical and grammatical error	2. Story has a few typographical and/or grammatical errors.	2. Many errors – either typographical and/or grammatical.
3. Story identifies each source used with his/her full name and title.	3. Story may not have identified all sources.	3. Story does not give the source of information.
4. Story uses adjectives sparingly.	4. Story may have some adjectives that are unnecessary.	4. Story “editorializes” or the opinion of the writer is evident.
5. Story uses adverbs sparingly.	5. Story may have used some adverbs.	5. Story is biased.
6. Story relies on strong verbs.	6. Verbs could be stronger.	6. Verbs are weak or reflect opinion of writer.
7. Story reflects more than one point of view.	7. Story needs more points of view.	7. Story relies on a single point of view.
8. Writer uses credible sources.	8. Some sources are used, but may not be the best.	8. Sources are not used or if so, not identified. May not be credible sources used.
9. Most sources are primarily sources.	7. Story reflects more than one point of view, but may need more.	9. Heresay or rumor evident.
10. Extra, unnecessary information has been eliminated.	8. Writer uses some questionable sources	10. Story is either too short to cover subject or long and unfocused.
	9. Reliance on secondary, not primary sources.	
	10. Editing is needed to tighten story to eliminate unnecessary detail.	



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- **Assignment:** News Sources: Advantages and Disadvantages

Rubric

TELEVISION	RADIO	ONLINE	NEWSPAPERS	MAGAZINES
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
23 - 25 = A	20 - 22 = B	17 - 19 = C	14 - 16 = D	0 - 13 = F



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- **Assignment:** Comparison of three sources reporting one story

Rubric

	NEWS STATION 1	NEWS STATION 2	NEWS STATION 3
Number of pro Subject Statements			
Number of con Subject Statments			
Body language Be specific, describe			